

- - OUR CORNER - -

THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF AMERICUS NEWSLETTER

"Building Bridges For Better Communication"

FEBRUARY 2023

HAA DISTRIBUTES SCHOOL SUPPLIES

"School after the Holidays"



"Krishenna Stevens; with SaKayla and Jaquis."

The Americus Housing Authority stepped outside the box and hosted a Back to School Giveaway in January. School supply packs were available in 3 categories; Pre-K to 4th grade, 5th grade to 8th grade;



Residents Ms. Hattie Walker, Ms. Angela Walker, and Mrs. Paula Harmon (Accounting Clerk)

and 9th to 12th grade. There were also free books available for both the parents and the children to choose from for their personal reading enjoyment. Most books were new, and others were slightly used. Tee-shirts from the Summer Reading Pals Program were given to students Pre-K to 2nd grade.

Mr. George Edge, CEO of the Americus Housing Authority and the Board of Commissioners were unified in their efforts to make these schools supplies readily available as the students returned to school to complete their 2022-2023 school term.

The event was organized by Mrs. Diana Roberts, Resident Services Coordinator. Also assisting in the School Supply Giveaway were *Manager of Technical Services*, Gary Woods; *Accounting Clerk*, Paula Harmon; and *Section 8 Housing Inspector*, Gail Watkins.

BEST WISHES to all Housing Authority and Sumter County area students in having a safe and enjoyable finish to the 2022-2023 school year.



**"Mrs. Diana Roberts (Resident Services Coordinator),
Ms. Tamika Mathis (Resident),
Mr. Gary Woods (Manager of Technical Services)**

EDUCATION

***is the most powerful tool
to changing the world.***

HELLO RESIDENTS:



Mr. George F. Edge, Chief Executive Officer

Since our agency converted to the RAD (*Rental Assistance Demonstration*) Program, many residents have experienced increases in your monthly rental payment. Under this program, your rental payment is calculated based on 30% of your monthly adjusted income minus the utility allowance for your apartment. We are no longer permitted to offer ceiling rents, nor flat rents which capped your rental payment at certain limits based on where you lived. It is projected that approximately 20% of our RAD tenant population have experienced significant increases in your monthly rent.

We have been holding quarterly “*Improve Your Finance*” workshops at the John C. Anderson Community Building in an effort to assist you in repositioning yourself to transition into homeownership. We have a homeownership program in place that can possibly assist you with as much as 40% off the price of building a new construction home at Ridge Woods Subdivision located off of Mayo Street. It is very possible that your mortgage payment could be less than your monthly rental payment. If you are interested, please reach out to Mrs. Diana Roberts at (229) 924-3386, Ext. 240.

Unfortunately, we have seen an alarming increase in violent criminal activity in some of our neighborhoods over the last two years. It is our responsibility to ensure that all of our neighborhoods are decent, SAFE, and sanitary. This year we will be making an assertive effort to make all of our neighborhoods safer by installing security cameras. The Housing Authority of Americus has partnered with the Americus Police Department to apply for a grant to make this happen. In today’s culture and social

climate, people are afraid to be forthcoming to provide information regarding criminal related activities. Security cameras will provide us with direct insight into various incidents to be able to take appropriate actions and remove the stress from you of having to get directly involved.

I encourage you to “*Say Something, If You See Something*” anonymously to your Project Manager, Manager of Housing, or myself. We do not release any information contained in anonymous reports in our investigative process. It is our desire that you live in a peaceful and enjoyable atmosphere at all times.

Finally, even though the State of Georgia is no longer in a declared State of Emergency regarding COVID-19, the virus will probably remain in our midst for an unknown period of time. So please continue to be cautious in an effort to keep our employees and you (*our residents*) safe.

- If you or a member of your family are in quarantine, **PLEASE DO NOT REPORT** maintenance work orders except for extreme emergencies. Extreme emergencies are defined as water leaks, drain backups, electrical issues such as shortages, air conditioning if the temp is above 90 degrees inside the apartment in the summer, and 40 degrees or below in the winter.
- If you have traveled and are not feeling well, **PLEASE DO NOT REPORT** maintenance work orders except for extreme emergencies.

For any and all other maintenance requests, please wait until your household has been released from quarantine.

Further, I want to encourage you to continue to wash your hands often. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds; especially if you are in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Thank you for choosing to be a resident of the Housing Authority of Americus!!

George F. Edge, CEO

“Without you there will be no me.”

FOR YOUR INFORMATION



Chief Mark A. Scott, Americus Chief of Police

As we enter a brand-new year, we see 2023 stretched out before us with unknown promise and challenge. The key to a successful year for the police department is largely dependent on maintaining and strengthening our partnerships with the community. 2022 was a year filled with both accomplishment and challenge. One of our annual goals as a police agency is always to try to reduce the number of crimes committed in the city. I am happy to say that we accomplished that goal for the sixth straight year with an overall reduction in reported incidents of 8.2%. Part I Crime (*serious incidents such as Robbery, Burglary and Aggravated Assault*) decreased 5.6% from 727 to 686 incidents. Part II Crime (*less serious incidents such as Shoplifting, Theft, and Criminal Trespass*) decreased 10% from 1041 to 937 incidents. Overall reported crime decreased from 1768 to 1623 incidents. The number of aggravated assaults decreased 4% from 109 to 105 reported incidents, but the number of reported incidents of shots fired into houses continued to increase with an 80% increase from 2021 from 21 to 38 incidents. It is a baffling phenomenon with crime decreasing in almost all categories, except for incidents of young men shooting into houses and vehicles.

As we enter the New Year, one of our biggest challenges is to address the escalating number of gun crimes being committed in Americus and Sumter County. We must somehow address the cultural shift in our community and across the nation that seems to be teaching our young people that personal disputes and arguments are best solved by driving by a rival's home or the home of a relative and riddling

the property with bullets. We are working with One Sumter and the UGA Fanning Institute for Leadership to sponsor a violent crime summit which is scheduled for February of 2023. The summit will bring criminal justice and community partners together to discuss ways that we can all work cooperatively to end the scourge of gun crimes plaguing our community. Our hope is that by sharing information and resources we can better address the root causes of violent behavior and give our young men and women a clear vision of the opportunities available to them in our community.

Like many of you, we had hoped that the COVID pandemic would be a thing of the past by now, but it lingers on and on. Keeping safety in mind, it is our plan to fully resume our community outreach programs in 2023. We are working with our current Neighborhood Watch Captains to revitalize the existing watch groups and are also working to identify new neighborhoods that are interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch Program. If you are interested in this program, contact Sgt. Carolina Pittman at 229-924-3677, ext. 347 for more information. We also hope to resume sessions of our Citizen's Police Academy this year and will be working with the Sumter County School System to offer a summer program for our Intermediate School students.

In closing, the men and women of your police department are dedicated to serving the people of our community based on our core values of Honesty, Integrity, and Respect. We welcome community input and cannot effectively operate without community support.

Wishing you a joyous, safe, and prosperous 2023,

Mark A. Scott

Americus Chief of Police

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**MEET OUR NEW
CUSTOMER SERVICE
REPRESENTATIVE**



Trenika Nicole Mapp is our new Customer Service Representative. Trenika is a native of Cordele, GA. She received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration for Accounting from Georgia Southwestern State University. She comes to the Americus Housing Authority with 24 years of customer service experience and 18 years of experience in finance.

As the Customer Service Representative for the Americus Housing Authority, Trenika enjoys interacting with the residents and her co-workers who are like family.

In addition to being a hard and dedicated employee, Trenika enjoys helping others, singing, watching movies, fellowshiping with friends, shopping, and spending time with family. Trenika looks forward to providing a great customer service experience for our residents and anyone who visits with the Americus Housing Authority.

**WELCOME
ABOARD
TRENIKA!!!**

**WE ARE HERE
TO SERVE YOU**

Danielle Flint (*HCV/RAD/Owned Assistant*) **245**

Cherryl Furlow (*PH/HCV Compliance Officer*)
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Katina Garrett (*Project Manager, Public Housing*) **220**

Paula Harmon (*Accounting Clerk*) **243**

Terry Harris (*Section 8 Case Manager*) **216**

Sharon Haugabook (*Project Manager, Public Housing*) **215**

Gwen Laster (*Case Manager – HCV*) **218**

Trenika Mapp (*Customer Service Rep*) **210**

Gail Watkins (*Housing Inspector, Section 8*)
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A’Niya Williams (*Occupancy Specialist*) **217**

Chief Executive Officer
Mr. George F. Edge, Ext. 211

Sheila DeLoach (*Manager of Finance*) – **241**
Penny McPeek (*Manager of Housing*) - **214**
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Resident Services Department – 240
Diana Roberts, Resident Services Coordinator

Maintenance Department
(229) 924-9073 / Direct Line
Bernice Johnson (*Maintenance Clerk*) – **225**

Southland Heights Apartments
(229) 924-4253
Cheryle Henry, Site Manager

GREETINGS FROM THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT



Mr. Gary Woods, *Manager of Technical Services*

Believe it or not, Spring is just around the corner. We have all just survived the coldest Winter in 25 years, with a low temperature of **14 degrees** right here in Americus, Georgia!!!

We will soon begin using air conditioning to control the indoor temperature. I would like to offer a few tips to try to keep your electric costs as reasonable as possible.

1. Keep your thermostat set at 78 degrees or lower.
2. Keep doors and windows closed.
3. Keep blinds and curtains closed on the "sun" side of the apartment.
4. The Housing Authority will change the air conditioning filter monthly at no charge.
5. In order to keep the filter clean, avoid dry sweeping the floor.
6. Keep a mat outside and inside your entrance doors to reduce the amount of dirt, and pollen that gets tracked into your apartment.
7. On cool days and evenings, open windows and doors and turn off the air conditioning.
8. Do not run your air conditioning unit with

any doors or windows open. It will tend to cause condensation inside your apartment and potentially cause damage to your system.

The lawn maintenance contractors will soon begin their task of maintaining the lawns in all areas of the Housing Authority. Please try to keep toys, bicycles, chairs, and debris off of the grass areas when the contractors are cutting. We have had a problem with vehicles being parked on the grass this winter which is a violation of your lease. So please do not park in any area that is not designated for parking. I realize that the grass in some areas will be pretty tall at the beginning of the cutting season but the grass will be cut on a regular basis until November.

I would like to take this opportunity to again say **THANK YOU** to all of the residents for your cooperation in maintaining the various areas with respect to cleanliness inside and outside the apartments. We still have some areas with problems, but for the most part the developments are better kept.

Please remember that if you require service or a repair, do not hesitate to call the service desk at 924-9073 anytime Monday thru Thursday 7:30 to 5:30. During the weekend and on holidays, be sure your request is an emergency and cannot wait until the next workday.

The Maintenance Department is here to serve you so do not hesitate to call us when you need service.

Blessings,

Gary L. Woods

Manager of Technical Services

***An ounce of prevention is
worth a pound of cure.***

SUMMER READING PALS 2023



June 5th thru June 29th

Reading is **FUN**damental and the Americus Housing Authority is making plans for **Summer Reading Pals 2023**.

The Summer Reading Pals Program is available to all 1st & 2nd graders. The program is under the leadership of local retired educator, Ms. Sandra Mitchell.

The Summer Reading Pals Program offers a variety of learning opportunities.

***Reading**

***Math**

***Social Interaction** both in the classroom and on field trips

***Writing Skills** (*Very crucial because with all of the technology available to our children, the simple skill of "hand-writing" is neglected in some classrooms. Parents should frequently observe and practice "cursive" hand-writing skills with their young children on a regular basis at home.*)

***Sight Words**

***Artwork**

The Summer Reading Pals Program helps to

keep the young minds focused on learning during the summer break from school. For more information, please contact Mrs. Diana Roberts at 924-3386, Ext. 240.

Class Dates for this summer will be:

June 5th – June 8th

June 12th – June 15th

(Closed for holiday on June 19th)

June 20th – June 22nd

June 26th - June 29th

Registration Starts: March 1st

Registration Ends: May 11th

(or when all available seats are filled).

A Registration / Medical Release Form is included in this newsletter for your convenience.

Also, **each child** that attends the Summer Reading Pals Program with **perfect attendance** will receive a **brand new bicycle**, complete with a **bicycle helmet** and a **bicycle lock**.

Ms. Sandra Mitchell guarantees that the learning activities and field trips will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the young readers get the most out of this learning opportunity. Each and every day is sure to offer a new and exciting learning adventure. There will be skills to learn, places to visit, food to enjoy, and many new friendships to be made.

REMEMBER: SEATS ARE LIMITED!!!





Each day in the United States, more than (9) people are killed and more than (20) people are injured in crashes involving distracted drivers.

FACTS:

*Distracted drivers are considered four (4) times more likely to cause a crash while texting.

*Younger, inexperienced drivers under the age of 20 are at an increased risk; they have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes.

*April is “**Distractive Driving Awareness Month**”.

*Text messaging creates a crash risk **23 times** greater than driving undistracted.

DRIVER SAFETY TIPS:

: Turn the cell phone off while driving, or change to the silent mode before entering your vehicle.

: Keep from texting while driving, browsing the internet or reading e-mails while driving. It is **against the law**

: Eliminate activities that cause distractions while driving, such as smoking, putting on makeup, or changing listening stations.

: Secure pets before driving. There are car seats designed specifically for pets.

: Ask a passenger to help navigate directions; pull over and review directions when needed.



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A mere (5) letters in a text message can change someone’s life forever.

The text says, “**I WILL SEE YOU SOON**”. But you never do.

Don’t let **TEXTING** blind you!!!

The Cost of a Text Message

Reckless/Careless Driving Ticket:

4-8 Points

Fine for ticket: \$50 - \$1,000

Car Repairs: \$6,000 minimum

Car Rental (during repairs): \$350.00

Insurance Premium Increase: 10-25%

Life Changing Physical Injuries

Loss of Lives

Jail Time for Vehicular Homicide

Was the message really **THAT** important?

Stop the texts. Stop the wrecks.



YouthBuild

EMPOWERMENT PATHWAYS
BUILDING FUTURES – CHANGING LIVES



COMING TO THE AMERICUS HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Americus Housing Authority is partnering with the YouthBuild Program to offer educational and other opportunities to our young adults.

YouthBuild programs provide low-income, out-of-work young adults ages 16 to 24, the opportunity to become productive members of their communities.

EDUCATION: Participants prepare for high school diplomas, GEDs, vocational school, or college. The curriculum integrates academics with life skills.

JOB TRAINING: Participants gain a sound work ethic and develop the skills needed to succeed in their career goals.

Earn While You Learn

\$\$\$\$

All participants will receive a weekly check throughout their enrollment in the program. The amount increases at each completed stage of the program.

YouthBuild Offers:

- Life Skills and Employability Workshops
- Career Scope
- NCCER (*National Center for Construction Educational and Research*) Certification
- Serve-Safe Certification
- Job Training
- Leadership Development
- Education
- Supportive Services
- Stipends (*Weekly Money*)
- Youth Development
- Follow-Up Assistance

YouthBuild Eligibility Guidelines

- Participants must be between the ages of 16-24 years of age
- Males between the ages of 18-24 must be registered for selective services
- Youth must be a member of a disadvantaged youth population such as low-income family, a youth in foster care, a youth offender, disabled, incarcerated parent, or a migrant youth.
- Youth must be a school drop-out or basic skills-deficient.

PROGRAM SUPPORT: Participants who successfully complete the program will have access to resources and support to assist them as they move forward to their future goals.

ANYONE WHO HAS NEVER MADE
A MISTAKE
HAS NEVER TRIED ANYTHING
NEW.

Albert Einstein

RECIPE CORNER

BEEF STROGANOFF



You will need:

1 ½ pound beef (tenderloin or top sirloin)
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons butter
1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
1 small onion, minced
1 teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon pepper
¾ cup sour cream
Hot buttered noodles (4 servings)

Cut meat into ¼ x 2" strips.

Mix flour with the salt. Toss meat with the mixture. Heat butter in heavy frying pan. Add garlic and onion. Sauté garlic until lightly browned. Spoon out and set aside.

Add meat to same pan, a few pieces at a time. Brown quickly and keep pieces as separate as possible to prevent "stewing" the meat.

When all meat is browned, return onion and garlic to pan. Sprinkle with paprika and pepper.

Blend well. Fold in the sour cream.

Heat slowly; do not boil.

Serve over hot buttered noodles. Garnish with parsley and butter sautéed mushroom caps.

BEST BANANA BREAD



You will need:

½ cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
4 bananas, finely crushed
1 ½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon vanilla

*Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

*Cream together butter and sugar.

*Add eggs and crushed bananas.

*Combine well.

*Sift together flour, soda and salt.

*Add to creamed mixture.

*Add vanilla.

*Pour into greased and floured loaf pan.

*Bake at 350 degrees for 60 minutes.

*Keeps well when refrigerated.

DID YOU KNOW: *Banana nut bread has healthy fats. It also has the ability to balance blood sugar levels and of lowering the level of cholesterol.*

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CURRENT RESIDENT OR

COMING YOUR WAY SOON:
SUMMER READING PALS
2023

June 5th – June 29th

SEATING IS LIMITED

REGISTER YOUR CHILD
TODAY!!!

